

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

Update on ACT Implementation

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 158.6453

History/Background:

Existing Policy. The passage of Senate Bill (SB) 130 during the 2006 Kentucky General Assembly added three readiness exams to Kentucky's assessment system—EXPLORE, PLAN and the ACT— and the optional WorkKeys assessment. Staff in multiple offices at the Kentucky Department of Education continues to work with stakeholders and ACT, Inc. toward complete implementation of the legislative requirements and integration of these requirements into the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS).

Several key activities have been accomplished while others are still in process.

- The EXPLORE test was administered to all Kentucky 8th graders during September 2006. EXPLORE results have been sent to schools, but currently are not included in accountability calculations. The Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) has discussed reserving a secure form for use in Kentucky so that consideration may be given to including this data in the CATS middle school accountability formula. ACT, Inc. has indicated they will be able to dedicate a form to Kentucky in 2007-08 at no additional cost. Upon request, ACT, Inc. will project the cost for subsequent years.
- The PLAN test was administered to all Kentucky 10th graders during September 2006 and results sent to schools. Results will be included in the 2006-2007 fall reporting for five percent (5%) of the CATS high school accountability formula.
- The ACT will be administered statewide in March 2008. Two options for administration were shared with the field and the overwhelming choice was for a March administration in 2008. In 2007-2008 and subsequent years PLAN and ACT results will be included for five percent (5%) of the CATS high school accountability formula. ACT Administration Guidance is provided as Attachment A.
- An independent alignment study of the ACT is underway through the leadership and direction of Dr. Norman Webb. Kentucky educators selected with input from the Kentucky Education Association, Kentucky Association of Education Supervisors and multiple university projects as well as external experts selected by Dr. Webb met under his direction on April 18, 19 and 20. During these sessions, the teams used a process designed by Dr. Webb to analyze the match between the ACT and the Kentucky Core Content for Assessment in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The results of this study are expected to be delivered to KDE in time for discussion with the National Technical Advisory Panel on Assessment and Accountability

(NTAPAA) at their June 7 and 8 meeting. Results of the NTAPAA discussion will be shared with the KBE at the June meeting.

- The results of the alignment study and the advice of advisory groups will impact the decision regarding the extent to which the ACT will be augmented with the Kentucky Core Content Test. The augmentation design and other technical aspects will need review by NTAPAA.
- WorkKeys will be administered during the 2007-2008 school year. A possibility of multiple assessment windows and/or an online format is being discussed to allow for the greatest amount of student success and flexibility.
- Contract discussions continue with ACT, Inc. regarding the specific Scope of Work for the expanded contract that includes ACT and WorkKey assessments.
- Preparation for a statewide administration of the ACT in March is ongoing. Administration logistics are being discussed and training is being planned. Attachment A is a collection of several guidance documents provided by ACT, Inc. that outline logistical requirements local school districts must follow in the administration of the ACT.

In addition to activities around the administration of the tests, work continues on intervention programs for students in need of assistance.

- Web-enabled Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) have been activated for all students in grades 6 – 12. Schools provide students and families with access to the online ILPs after advising teams in the schools have been trained. About 50% of schools have completed this process; the remainder will be implementing next year. The ILP is populated with data from the student information and assessment systems and is keyed to the student's unique identifier. Students use the ILP as a planner, adding their own information about career and learning goals. The ILP builds a portfolio of information about that student (courses taken, assessment results, extracurriculars, intervention and support services received) from year to year, school to school, and district to district. Students and their parents use the ILP with advisors and their teachers to plan and document their progress through school and to prepare for next steps in learning. Administrators can pull data from the ILPs to anticipate needs of incoming classes (i.e., numbers of students reading below grade level, numbers of English language learners, and numbers requesting AP courses) to plan resource allocations and intervention services. The ILP also facilitates communication with parents around the progress of their student.
- Extended School Services (ESS) is a program that provides additional instruction, counseling, and homework help to those students who are struggling and have fallen behind in the skills necessary to be successful at their grade level. ESS services can be provided after school, before school, evenings, intersession, Saturday, academic jump-start and through a daytime waiver. Students were served in all core content areas; however, reading, math and written language were the areas that were the main focus for most of the students. As of 1/2/07, 748 schools offered daytime ESS programs (524 Elementary Schools, 125 Middle Schools and 98 High Schools). The collaboration model is the most common design model. In this model, the ESS

teacher is in the regular classroom and provides additional instruction after the initial instruction from the classroom teacher. A model being adopted by middle and high schools is designing an ESS class as an elective. The classes have a teacher to student ratio of approximately 1:10 and identified students receive additional instruction during that entire elective class period. Instruction is aligned to student learning needs as identified by assessment and classroom performance data. In response to SB 130 and the high school redesign initiative, the regulation governing ESS is being analyzed for needed revisions. Potential revision of ESS regulations has been identified as an upcoming agenda item for the Kentucky Board of Education.

- The Kentucky Department of Education, through the Kentucky Virtual High School, offers intervention and assessment modules as well as other instructional content that may be utilized by any school in the state to design a system of personalized interventions for students who are in need of additional instruction or other interventions/remediation. This content is available in all content areas required by Kentucky's minimum high school graduation requirements (704 KAR 3:305, Minimum High School Graduation Requirements).
- The Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Virtual High School is also providing support and assistance to districts for the utilization of Blackboard, a content management system, to provide a combination of online and face-to-face instruction to target students' instructional needs. The statewide contract for Blackboard includes provisions for user licenses available to Kentucky districts. Training opportunities and assistance with delivering instruction using Blackboard are being provided to districts for these opportunities. The flexibility that the use of technology provides will allow districts to expand access to and increase individualization of intervention programs, including access from home and during the summer.
- Several school systems are working in partnership with local colleges and universities to deliver instruction during the senior year that will offset the need for remediation when the student matriculates. Early indications are that these programs are effective and this information will be shared with all districts as a promising practice. The Kentucky Virtual High School has received a small grant from the BellSouth Foundation to begin placing developmental mathematics content online to expand access and opportunity for students whose ACT score places them in remedial education, but who are willing to work during the senior year to overcome those deficits. Instructors will be from both K12 and higher education. Students who meet their learning benchmarks will be admitted to credit-bearing work when they enroll in college.
- The Department is supporting professional development and collecting research on best practices in early intervention programs to support schools that have a new focus on middle-to-high school transition in response to SB 130 and goals to increase graduation rates. Many schools are implementing 9th grade academies. KDE is partnering with co-ops, local P16 councils and others to identify best practices and

provide technical assistance in changing current structures to enable more effective instruction.

- Extensive work is also underway to mitigate non-academic factors that impact student achievement. In response to SB 130, those program areas are working more closely with partners to help schools identify early warning indicators that put students at high risk of dropping out or academic failure:
 - Early identification of students at risk (through Dropout Prevention Grants)
 - Prevention & Intervention Support Services (KY Association for Substance Abuse Prevention, Keep Youth Safe and Sober Project, Prevent Child Abuse KY, KY Association of Sexual Assault Programs, KY Domestic Violence Association, KY Suicide Prevention Group)
 - Parental Involvement (Substance Abuse Prevention Program Grant, Dropout Prevention Grants, Prevent Child Abuse KY)
 - Community Involvement (Empower Project, Community Crisis Response Board, Dropout Prevention Grant, Substance Abuse Prevention Program Grant)
 - Evaluation (Dropout Prevention Grants, Substance Abuse Prevention Program Grant, KY Center for School Safety, KY Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children, Dept. of Juvenile Justice)
 - KRS 159.051, the No Pass/No Drive statute (KY Dept. of Transportation, KY School Boards Association)
 - School Safety (NCLB Unsafe School Option/Persistently Dangerous Schools, Safe School Assessments, Safe Schools Data Collection Project)
 - School Report Card (Dropout rate, school safety procedures and discipline data)
 - Healthy Learning Environment (Coordinated School Health, KY Suicide Prevention Group, Substance, Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Prevention)
 - Student Support Services (School Counselors, School Social Workers, School Psychologists)
 - Alternative Education (KY Center for School Safety, KY Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children, Dept. of Juvenile Justice, KY Dept. of Mental Health and Mental Retardation)
 - Missing Persons Program (KY State Police Missing Persons Unit)

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

The Kentucky Board of Education will continue to discuss and make decisions regarding the complete integration of the readiness assessments into the state assessment and accountability system. Full implementation of SB 130 brings new opportunities for Kentucky's students to be prepared and proficient.

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